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Housing

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FREEDMEN'S JOURNAL

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"A JOURNAL VOICING THE VIEWS OF THE FREEDMEN'S TOWN COMMUNITY"

Allen Parkway Village

Poor, homeless suffer—who is delaying rehabilitation?

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The "fate" of Allen Parkway Village was discussed years before its construction. Today the list for public housing names thousands of persons and families. Homeless families are seen daily in Houston under bridges, on the streets and in crowded shelters.

Allen Parkway Village (APV) was built in 1942 and carried the name of San Felipe Courts. Hundreds of African homeowners were displaced so that Houston's largest public housing project could be constructed. Once the project was for occupancy, it discrim-

inated against Africans. In fact, Africans were not allowed to live in APV until the late 1960s. It was then that maintenance of the project began to go lacking. But it was in 1979 when the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provided the Housing Authority of the city of Houston (HACH) \$10 million to rehabilitate APV. However, \$1.5 million was the only sum and it was applied to administrative salaries and unnecessary machinery says one tenant there.

After a seven year battle to preserve and restore APV, city council and mayor Kathryn J. Whit-

mire voted to rescind the ordinance of August 1984 to demolish APV. Yet, Whitmire refuses to rehabilitate the 100 or less units that are occupied by tenants there. Everyone residing in APV pays rent. Public housing is not limited to persons on a fixed income. Initially, public housing was built to house families who were economically disadvantaged but on temporary basis.

Civil Liberties Union and Gulf Coast Legal Foundation attorneys continue to battle HACH on behalf of APV residents.

State Senator Craig Washington and State Rep.

Larry Evans law firm is defending HACH. Washington and Evans are elected officials for the Freedmen's Town community.

Councilman Vince Ryan tells APV tenants that he supports the preservation of APV. But Ryan has written in a local newspaper otherwise.

Congressman George Leland did not come forward to help his constituency on the issue of APV until the legendary Congressman Henry B. Gonzales intervened. Now Gonzales' district is in San Antonio, Texas but he went to bat for the citizens of Freedmen's

Town. Pressure and embarrassment caused or forced Leland to take a stand despite his back-and-forth during Marvin Zindler's week-long series on APV.

"All the people (homeless) need is the key to the vacant units in APV," says Lenwood Johnson, president, APV Residents Council.

The Task Force has been resolved. Although some religious leaders meant well, some spectators felt Susan Carpenter and politicians were just stalling through this up-

(Cont'd on page 6)